

## Overview

Title I, Part A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA) provides local educational agencies (LEAs, or school districts) with extra resources to help improve instruction in high-poverty schools and ensure that poor and minority children have the same opportunity as other children to meet challenging State academic standards. The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) reauthorizes the ESEA and incorporates nearly all of the major reforms proposed by President Bush in his own No Child Left Behind framework for education reform, particularly in the areas of assessment, accountability, and school improvement. The new law requires States to develop standards in reading and math, and assessments linked to those standards for all students in grades 3-8. LEAs and schools must use Title I funds for activities that scientifically based research suggests will be most effective in helping all students meet these State standards.

States also must develop annual adequate yearly progress (AYP) objectives—disaggregated by student groups based on poverty, race and ethnicity, disability, and limited English proficiency—that will result in all students achieving proficiency in reading and math within 12 years. Biennial State participation in the State-level version of the National Assessment of Educational Progress will provide benchmarks for ensuring the rigor of State standards and assessments.

NCLB also requires LEAs to permit students in schools that fail to meet annual State AYP objectives for two consecutive years to transfer to a better public school. If schools continue to fail to meet AYP, students will be permitted to use Title I funds to obtain educational services from the public- or private-sector provider selected by their parents from a State-approved list.

The new law requires schools identified for improvement (after failing to make AYP for two consecutive years) to develop improvement plans incorporating strategies from scientifically based research. Schools that fail to improve would be subject to increasingly tough corrective actions—such as replacing school staff or significantly decreasing management authority at the school level—and could ultimately face restructuring, which involves a fundamental change in governance, such as a State takeover or placement under private management. To help States, districts, and schools carry out needed improvements, NCLB significantly increases and makes mandatory the reservation of a portion of Part A allocations for school improvement.

NCLB also authorizes State Academic Achievement Awards to schools that significantly close achievement gaps or exceed AYP standards for two or more consecutive years, as well as awards to teachers in such schools. However, the new law punishes States that fail to put in place systems of standards, assessments, and accountability by permitting—and in some cases requiring—the Secretary to withhold a portion of Federal funds provided for the administration of Title I.